



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2007
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CRM
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

MASSACHUSETTS MAN WHO HELPED CARRY OUT WWII NAZI MASS MURDER OF JEWS IN POLAND IS ORDERED DEPORTED

WASHINGTON – An immigration judge in Boston has ordered the removal of Vladas Zajanckauskas, a Sutton, Mass., man who served during World War II in a notorious Nazi unit that took part in the brutal liquidation of the Warsaw Jewish Ghetto in German-occupied Poland, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher for the Criminal Division announced today.

Immigration Judge Wayne R. Iskra ordered Zajanckauskas removed to his native Lithuania. In a 41-page decision, the judge found that Zajanckauskas served as a non-commissioned officer at the SS-operated base and training camp in Trawniki, Poland, where he and other men “were trained to assist in all aspects of Operation Reinhard, the Nazi plan to murder all Jews in Poland.” Judge Iskra ruled that Zajanckauskas participated in Nazi-sponsored persecution at Trawniki and in Warsaw when he was deployed there by the SS with other “Trawniki men” to take part in the liquidation of the Jewish Ghetto during Operation Reinhard.

In his decision, Judge Iskra noted that Zajanckauskas “admitted that Trawniki men sent to Warsaw stood in the cordon to prevent Jews from escaping, guarded the transit square where captured Jews awaited transportation to labor and concentration camps, conducted house-to-house searches for hidden Jews, skirmished with resistance fighters, and took part in the shooting of some captured Jews.” Members of Zajanckauskas’ own sub-unit, in which he was “one of the top-ranked individuals,” committed “terrible crimes,” including murder and rape, the judge found. Prior to the brutal April-May 1943 operation, the Warsaw Ghetto held about 40,000 Jews. During the operation, about 7,000 of the ghetto inhabitants were sent to be gassed at the Treblinka extermination camp, thousands more died in the fighting, and the rest were sent to various Nazi concentration camps and forced labor camps.

Zajanckauskas, who was born in Lithuania in 1915, immigrated to the United States from Austria in February 1950 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1956.

Zajanckauskas’ U.S. citizenship was revoked by a federal district court judge in Boston in 2005 on the basis that he had obtained his U.S. visa by falsely telling U.S. officials that he had been a farmer in Lithuania until 1944. The denaturalization and removal cases were investigated and prosecuted by the Criminal Division’s Office of Special Investigations (OSI).

“Vladas Zajanckauskas was an accomplice in Nazi mass murder,” said OSI Director Eli M. Rosenbaum. “Had he told the truth after the war, he never would have been permitted to enter this country.”

The removal case was litigated by OSI trial attorneys William H. Kenety, Stephen Paskey and Edgar Chen, and it is a result of OSI’s continuing efforts to identify, investigate and take legal action against participants in Nazi persecution who reside in the United States. Since OSI began operations in 1979, it has won cases against 105 individuals who participated in Nazi crimes of persecution. In addition, attempts by more than 175 individuals implicated in wartime Axis crimes to enter the United States have been thwarted as a result of OSI’s “Watch List” program, which is enforced in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security.

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